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GONE IN 4 MINUTES
Thieves steal Napoleon-era jewels from Louvre
Robbers on Sunday broke into the iconic Paris museum and made off with the jewels in an audacious daylight robbery lasting just four minutes
Around 9.30 am, several intruders broke a first-floor window, cut through the glass with a disc cutter, and headed straight to the Gallery of Apollo, officials said
The thieves stole eight items from a centuries-old 23-piece Napoleon collection and fled on scooters
The value of the stolen items is still being assessed. Meanwhile, a manhunt is on with the authorities looking for four suspects
The crown of Empress Eugenie was among the items stolen, but it was later found near the museum

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Gaza truce strained after Israel, Hamas trade fire

AGENCIES

JUST nine days after the guns fell silent in Gaza, the landmark ceasefire agreement appeared to be faltering on Sunday, with Israel carrying out fresh airstrikes in Gaza after accusing Hamas of violating the truce terms by firing at Israeli troops.

Gaza's civil defence agency, which operates under Hamas authority, said at least 33 people, including a woman and two children, were killed in Israeli strikes across the territory on Sunday. Israel said it was checking reports of casualties.

Israel's military said Hamas militants opened fire on troops in parts of Rafah city that fall under Israeli control, according to the agreed ceasefire lines. In response, the military launched fresh airstrikes on Hamas targets in southern Gaza, it said.

Israel said it responded to at least three incidents in which "Hamas fired towards our troops standing behind the yellow line in the agreed-upon positions". Hamas, however, insisted it was complying with the truce and accused Israel of inventing pretexts to continue the war. The group said communication with its remaining units in Rafah had been cut off for months, and "we are not responsible for any incidents occurring in those areas".

The escalation comes just hours after Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu instructed security forces to take "strong action" against Hamas over alleged truce violations.

Israel informed the US in advance of the strikes, *Axios* reported. The US urged Israel to "show restraint". P11

Smoke billows following an Israeli strike in the central Gaza Strip on Sunday | AFP

MEETING ON OCT 22 IN DELHI

Ladakh representatives called for talks with MHA

FAYAZ WANI @ Srinagar

IN a significant thaw after months of impasse, Ladakh's key agitators are set to resume talks with the Centre, with an eight-member delegation from the Leh Apex Body (LAB) and Kargil Democratic Alliance (KDA), alongside MP Haji Haneefa Jan, scheduled to engage a Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) subcommittee on October 22 in New Delhi.

LAB co-chairman Chering Dorjay told this paper that the MHA has invited them for talks chaired by the Union Home Secretary. This marks the first direct engagement between Ladakh representatives and the Centre after the dialogue broke down following protests in Leh on September 24 demanding statehood and inclusion under the Sixth Schedule. The violence left four dead and over 80 injured.

Ahead of the meeting, the MHA on October 17 announced a judicial inquiry led by a retired Supreme Court judge into the September 24 incident — one of the key preconditions set by LAB and KDA to resume talks. The delegation will include three representatives each from LAB and KDA, their legal advisor, and MP Haji Haneefa. Dorjay said they would push for the release of all detainees, including climate activist Sonam Wangchuk, who remains jailed under the National Security Act, and seek compensation for the victims.

> We welcome the decision of the Government of India to invite us for talks in Delhi and look forward to a positive outcome
>
> Chering Dorjay, LAB

KDA leader Sajjad Kargili said the LAB and KDA will jointly attend the meeting. "We are meeting for statehood & Sixth Schedule status, justice for September 24 victims, and release of detainees including Sonam Wangchuk. Only genuine dialogue can fulfil Ladakh's aspirations," he said.

EXPRESS READ

Survey deadline in city now Oct 31

Bengaluru: With the Socio-Economic and Educational Survey making less than 40% progress in Bengaluru, Chief Minister Siddaramaiah extended the deadline from October 24 to 31. A short break from October 21 to 23 too has been declared for Deepavali | P2

CENTRE WRITES TO STATES

STATES DIRECTED TO SNUFF OUT BONDED LABOUR, TRAFFICKING

JITENDRA CHOUBEY @ New Delhi

THE Ministry of Labour and Employment (MoLE) has directed all states and Union Territories to intensify action against inter-state human trafficking and bonded labour, following mounting concerns over slow progress in rehabilitation efforts.

In a government order issued on September 25, Secretary Vandana Gurnani instructed all Chief Secretaries to constitute vigilance committees in every district and sub-division to track bonded and child labour cases. States have also been asked to submit proposals for immediate financial assistance to rescued labourers within three months of issuing release certificates.

> Centre will rehabilitate 1.84 crore bonded labourers by 2030. So far, 35,000 labourers have been freed
>
> Ministry of Labour

EXPRESS EXCLUSIVE

The directive follows a Supreme Court order of November 22, 2024, which asked MoLE to consult with states to simplify procedures for identifying and rehabilitating bonded labourers. This is the second such directive since December 2024, after the Centre expressed dissatisfaction with the states' progress. "However, not much progress seems to have been made," the order observed.

MoLE oversees the Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act, 1976, and implements the "Rehabilitation of Bonded Labour-2021" scheme, which provides compensation of ₹30,000 and rehabilitation grants of ₹1 lakh for men and ₹2 lakh for women. NCRB data for 2023 shows forced labour (23,520 cases) as the largest human trafficking crime, followed by sexual exploitation (17,944). Maharashtra, Telangana, and Odisha reported the highest cases.

Tina Kuriakose Jacob of the International Institute for Migration Development termed the order "a step toward systematic review and monitoring to protect the poorest and most vulnerable workers."

NEED ORGAN, TISSUE DONATION TEAMS IN ALL HOSPITALS

KAVITA BAJELI-DATT @ New Delhi

ALL hospitals in India should have dedicated teams to counsel families of potential organ and tissue donors, the Centre said in a communication to all states. Hospitals have been asked to report all deaths, make efforts for timely counselling of family members, and encourage them for organ and tissue donation.

The move comes as India faces a huge gap between the number of patients requiring human organ and tissue transplants and the availability of donors.

"It is essential that hospitals should constitute organ and tissue donation teams by involving brain stem death committee members and transplant coordinator/counsellor," said the National Organ and Tissue Transplant Organization (NOTTO) in a letter to all states. NOTTO is a national-level oganisation set up under the Union health ministry.

> Even if the family does not agree to organ donation, the option for tissue donation must be given to the family
>
> Dr Anil Kumar, director, NOTTO

NOTTO director Dr Anil Kumar, in his letter, said the organ and tissue donation team must be mandatorily notified of all the deaths happening in hospitals.

"Even if the family does not agree to organ donation, the option for tissue donation must be given to the family," Dr Kumar said in the letter dated October 17. Tissues such as corneas, skin, bones, and heart valves can be donated from cases of brain-stem-death and cardiovascular deaths in hospitals or due to natural death cases. Tissues can be harvested up to 10 hours after death. One donor can save eight lives.

"India requires nearly one lakh corneas annually, yet only about one-third of this demand is being met. Bone donation, in particular, plays a vital role in the treatment of patients with trauma, nonunion of bone fractures, congenital abnormalities, and other bone-related disorders," the letter said.

City pubs lose fizz, blame duty hike, poor infra

BALA CHAUHAN @bengaluru

THE pub city is seemingly losing its spirit with "loss in business" by almost 25% in the last quarter. Sources in the food & beverage (F&B) industry told TNIE that the overall footfalls in their outlets have gradually reduced over the last few months.

"There are several reasons for loss of business. Steep increase in Additional Excise Duty (AED) on Indian Made Liquor, fluctuation in beer prices within this year, long weekends, job insecurity and layoffs, heavy rain, bad road condition, traffic and lack of adequate parking space in the city have had a cumulative effect on people dining out," said some of the owners of pubs and restobars.

"We see many of our regular diners holding back. Corporate companies are cutting cost and people are becoming cautious spenders," said the owners. One of the most perceptive shifts is the loss of footfalls in pubs and bars in IT hubs in the city, they added. "We manage to do 80% of our business in the CBD, but in the IT corridors, there has been a perceptible reduction by at least 20% and it's huge," said owners of some leading pubs and bars.

They added that growing job insecurity and layoffs, especially in the IT sector, which is the main source of revenue for the F&B industry, high rentals, cost of manpower and living are the reasons why people who earlier dined out every weekend have now cut down on their spending. P5

> The market is saturated. Sustaining them while maintaining quality and service is a challenge. Some businesses are suffering because of this as well
>
> Owners of pubs and bars

Department of Forest, Ecology and Environment
and Karnataka State Pollution Control Board
Let the light of
Deepavali
bring joy and prosperity
Wishing everyone a Happy
Deepavali Festival
Shri Siddaramaiah
Hon'ble Chief Minister
Shri D. K. Shivakumar
Hon'ble Deputy Chief Minister
This Deepavali, let's light ECO-friendly clay lamps.
Deepavali is the festival of lights, let us avoid Air & Noise Pollution.
Directives of Hon'ble Supreme Court
Rule 31.10.2010 and 23.10.2018
Do not use prohibited fireworks which cause noise and air pollution.
Fireworks above 110 decibels are prohibited.
Bursting of Crackers is allowed only for 2 days from 6.00 AM to 7.00 AM and 8.00 PM to 10.00 PM.
Only apporved Green Crackers are allowed
Use green fireworks approved by PESO & NEERI Institute.
Chemical and Hazardus Fireworks are Banned
Save Environment
Avoid Crackers
May the lamp shine bright this Deepavali
Let's keep the crackers far away
Shri Eshwar B. Khandre
Hon'ble Minister for Forest, Ecology and Environment
Graced the World Environment Day Celebrations
Shri P. M. Narendraswamy
Hon'ble Chairman
Karnataka State Pollution Control Board
Graced the World Environment Day Celebrations
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